& Army Jawans entering into reserved coaches with unreserved tickets and occupying the reserved seats/berths of bonafide passengers do come to notice. However, separate details relating to unauthorised entry of policemen or army jawans are not maintained.

(d) to (f) It is the constant endeavour of the Railways to ensure comfortable journey of the reserved passengers. As such, apart from manning of reserved coaches, special & surprise checks are conducted against ticketless/ irregular travel and persons detected travelling unauthorisedly are dealt with as per relevant provisions of the law. In addition the minimum penalty has also been enhanced from Rs. 50/- to Rs. 250/- with effect from 1.7.2004 in order to discourage entering of unauthorized passengers in reserved coaches.

Banning of licensed porters

4763. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken a decision to ban licensed porters of Railways to handle parcels;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the total number of licensed porters in the country;

(d) whether this decision is likely to have an adverse effect on the livelihood of these porters; and

(e) if so, the steps taken by Government to protect the interests of these licensed porters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (e) The licensed porters are given licenses for carrying passengers' luggage for which they get porterage charges directly from the passengers, which are revised from time to time. Though they were allowed to be utilised for parcel handling work for short periods only, their main livelihood continues to be carrying passengers' luggage. On most of the Zonal Railways, licensed porters are satisfactorily carrying on their job except on a few Railways where some Court Cases are involved. There are approximately 37700 licensed porters on Indian Railways.